

can be no doubt that sports fans like having a home team to root for. And that merchants in the area of the stadium benefit from its presence.

But there is no free lunch—at least not for people unlucky enough not to own a franchise in the NBA, NFL or Major League Baseball. Tax money that the federal government does not collect is not available for other things—education, health care or tax cuts.

When a city gives a team the gift of rent below market rates, or a special property tax deal, it deprives itself of revenues it would otherwise have to repair its streets, hire more cops, or spruce up its parks.

Which would boost New Yorkers' morale more: a stadium athwart the West Side railroad tracks or streets that don't break car axles and school buildings that don't leak?

Not an easy question, but one to which Houston mayor Bob Lanier thinks he has the answer. When the Oilers tried to roll his city for a new stadium he turned them down, telling the press that with the money it would cost him to keep the Oilers he could just about get the job of cleaning up Houston's slum neighborhoods done.

Steinbrenner does have a real problem. Until lately, the Yankees had been having a spectacular season, thanks in part to The Boss' willingness to engage in the Daryl Strawberry and Dwight Gooden rehabilitation projects.

But attendance has not responded proportionately: The number of fans going to the Stadium is not as high as the Yankees' won-lost record would warrant, according to a quick comparison I have made with the league-wide relationship between success on the field and success at the box office.

So Steinbrenner, who should not be expected to keep his team in a place in which he cannot maximize his profits, has every reason to shop around for a new site to which to take his athletes when his lease is up in The Bronx. Just as the Mets have every right to want a new field on which to display their somewhat more problematic wares.

Moynihan has no objection to new sports emporia. "Building new professional sports facilities is fine with me," he says. "But, please, do not ask the American taxpayers to pay for them."

Whether or not the Senator gets his bill passed over the kicking and screaming objections of the nation's politically potent mayors, its bond-issuing investment bankers and its itinerant team-owners, Mayor Giuliani would do well to take Moynihan's advice.

Perhaps Donald Trump and Steinbrenner can strike a deal for a privately financed stadium. Or perhaps New York has enough reasons to be proud of its national and international position to follow Houston's lead, and wave goodbye to its sports mogul and his millionaire athletes.

[From the Buffalo News, Aug. 11, 1996]

#### CLOSE LOOPHOLE THAT HAS THE PUBLIC SUBSIDIZING EVER GLITZIER STADIUMS

If the public really is fed up with subsidizing wealthy team owners and athletes, it will cheer a proposal to eliminate the tax exemptions routinely granted bonds sold for stadium projects.

The proposal comes from Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y. It should be especially cheered in places like Western New York, whose sports teams will be constant targets for raids by other cities as long as those cities lure them with facilities built with the help of tax exemptions.

Take away these indirect subsidies, and those cities will not be able to dangle such enticing packages before team owners.

In fact, take away the public subsidy and force teams to build their own facilities, and

maybe they won't be able to spend a zillion dollars on second-string players. Instead, the money now going into exorbitant salaries would have to be used to build or fix up stadiums.

That could start a downward spiral—or at least a leveling off—in player salaries that might even have a spillover effect on ticket prices before they become totally out of reach of the average family.

Moynihan's bill is not without its critics. County Executive Gorski worries that eliminating the tax-exemption on stadium bonds will make it harder for Erie County to finance the \$2.1 million needed to upgrade Rich Stadium. The improvements are aimed at enticing the Buffalo Bills to sign a new lease and stay in Western New York.

Gorski's view is understandable for a public official interested only in the current negotiations.

But leases can be broken, as the former Cleveland Browns illustrated. That team moved to Baltimore after being offered a \$200 million new stadium and financial enticements ranging from free rent to all luxury-box, parking and stadium-ad revenue.

Could Erie County really compete with that kind of civic insanity—and does it really want it—if another community eyes the Bills in a few years?

Eliminating the tax exemption for stadium bonds will make it that much harder for another city to make that kind of offer.

Granted, it might mean Erie County would pay a little more for its bonds now. But it also would help assure the long-term presence of sports teams in small markets like Buffalo.

And from a broader perspective, the measure would mean taxpayers would no longer subsidize private sports enterprises by funding what one congressional critic calls "a public-housing program for millionaires."

A Congressional Research Service study estimates the public is losing nearly \$100 million a year on sports facilities now under construction. During one five-year period in the '80s, those tax breaks cost taxpayers \$18.2 billion.

Moynihan says that was never meant to be. The 1986 Tax Reform Bill eliminated industrial development bonds, the original vehicle for tax-exempt bond financing for stadiums. But he says Congress didn't prohibit using governmental bonds for stadiums because the "possibility was too remote to have occurred to us."

But that loophole wasn't too remote for wide-eyed local officials and profiteering team owners to uncover. Moynihan's bill would close the loophole, saving taxpayers millions.

Those savings could be put to far better uses than helping wealthy team owners play one city against another in the stadium sweepstakes.●

#### NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

● Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, today is National POW/MIA Recognition Day and I rise to honor those brave Americans whose fate remains uncertain. As we reflect not only on those courageous servicemembers who so valiantly went off in defense of their country, we should also pause and remember the families and loved ones of those who never returned. The family who received definite notice that a loved one was positively killed in action could mourn and grieve and learn to cope with life alone; but those American

families whose loved ones were missing, prisoners, or unaccounted for, bear an additional burden—the burden of uncertainty. They cannot bury their loved ones and work through the grief that comes with loss. They live with doubt, denial, and hope that somehow their son, husband, brother, or father will some day come home.

There are 90,769 American servicemembers unaccounted for from wars in the 20th century; 1,648 from World War I, 78,794 from World War II, 8,177 from Korea, and 2,150 from Southeast Asia. We have made extensive efforts to gain full accounting for all these servicemembers. We aggressively continue our talks with the Governments of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos to gain information about the servicemen who went there but did not return. Those efforts continue and have resulted in information about a few of our unaccounted-for servicemen and the recovery of 20 sets of remains between October 1995 and March 1996. Recent efforts with North Korea have also provided long overdue information about missing Americans. Additionally, we recovered the remains of a World War II hero this year, allowing his family finally to say their last farewells. However, we must not allow these small successes to make us complacent. We must continue our efforts and view the successes of today not as an end, but as a beginning in our efforts to gain more information in the upcoming years.

Today, as we stop to look at the POW/MIA flag which flies not only in the rotunda of our Nation's Capitol but all around this great country, I hope all Americans will pause and remember with pride, sadness, and hope for the future, the valiant efforts of these brave soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who answered the call.●

#### CONCERNING A HOLD ON S. 555, A BILL TO AMEND THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE ACT

● Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I want to inform the Senate that I have put a hold on S. 555 so that I may have time to negotiate my request that the Senate take up S. 697, the Domestic Violence Identification and Referral Act, in conjunction with S. 555. I believe that if we take up a bill dealing with the education of health professionals, we should insure that doctors, nurses and other health professionals are trained to identify, refer, and treat victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between 15 and 44. It seems to me that if the Federal Government is going to invest money in educating medical students, they should at least be trained in how to identify and refer cases of domestic violence. This is why I have requested that the Senate and the Committee on Labor and Human Resources consider my and Senator BOXER's legislation in conjunction with S. 555.●